

Report: New generation of tobacco products threatens efforts to reduce tobacco use in Oregon

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Congress Urged to Grant FDA Authority Over Tobacco Products

An insidious new generation of tobacco products is threatening efforts to reduce tobacco use in the United States, warns a new report issued today by a coalition of public health organizations.

The report describes how tobacco manufacturers take advantage of the lack of government regulation to design and market products that recruit new youth users, create and sustain addiction to nicotine, and discourage current users from quitting. Responding to declining smoking rates and growing restrictions on smoking, tobacco manufacturers are finding novel ways to entice new users, especially children, and discourage quitting.

To stop the tobacco industry's harmful practices and protect public health, leading public health organizations urge Congress to pass pending legislation granting the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) authority to regulate tobacco products and their marketing. The entire Oregon congressional delegation has cosponsored the legislation. As a member of the Energy and Commerce Committee with jurisdiction over the bill, Representative Darlene Hooley will play a particularly important role.

The report was issued by the American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network, American Heart Association, American Lung Association and Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids.

In Oregon, tobacco use causes \$1.1 billion in health care bills each year and kills 5,000 residents; 17 percent of Oregon high school students currently smoke.

The report details key trends including:

-- Flavored products: Cigarettes, smokeless tobacco and cigars have been introduced in an array of candy, fruit and alcohol flavors. R.J. Reynolds' Camel cigarettes, for example, have come in more than a dozen flavors, including lime, coconut and pineapple, toffee, and mint. Flavorings mask the harshness of the products and make them more appealing to new users, especially children.

-- Novel smokeless products: New and more novel smokeless tobacco products have been marketed as ways to help smokers sustain their addiction in the growing number of places where they cannot smoke. In addition to traditional chewing and spit tobacco, smokeless tobacco now comes in teabag-like pouches and even in

dissolvable, candy-like tablets.

-- Targeted products and marketing: New products and marketing have been aimed at women, girls and other populations. The most recent example is R.J. Reynolds' Camel No. 9 cigarettes, a pink-hued version that one newspaper dubbed "Barbie Camel" because of marketing that appealed to girls.

-- Unproven health claims: A growing list of products have been marketed with unproven and misleading claims that they are less harmful than traditional cigarettes. Claims have included "All of the taste... Less of the toxin" (Brown & Williamson's Advance cigarettes) and "Reduced carcinogens. Premium taste" (Vector Tobacco's Omni Cigarettes).

-- Undisclosed Product Designs: The report also illustrates how tobacco manufacturers control nicotine delivery to maximize addiction while using flavorings and other additives to make their products taste milder, easier to inhale and more attractive to children and first time smokers. A few aspects of product design not disclosed to consumers include the use of :

-- Ammonia to increase the speed and efficiency of nicotine absorption.

-- Eugenol and Menthol to numb the throat to minimize irritation from smoke.

-- Glycerin and Cocoa to enable deep lung exposure (Cocoa produces carcinogens when burned)

-- Sugars and Chocolate to make smoke milder and make cigarettes more appealing, especially to children and first time smokers.

-- Filter Technology and Ventilation Holes that allows deep penetration of nicotine into the lungs of the smoker and increase the addictiveness of the product.

The report makes it clear that tobacco products are highly engineered nicotine delivery devices finely tuned to appeal to the taste, feel, smell and other sensations of new and addicted smokers.

"By granting the FDA authority over tobacco, Congress can protect our children from tobacco addiction," said Dana Kaye, American Lung Association of Oregon. "We thank the entire Oregon congressional

delegation for their support of this bipartisan, life-saving legislation and urge them to fight for its enactment this year."

Bipartisan legislation pending before Congress (S. 625/H.R. 1108) would give the FDA authority to:

- Restrict tobacco advertising and promotions, especially to children.

- Ban candy-flavored cigarettes.

- Require tobacco companies to disclose the contents of tobacco products, changes to their products and research about the health effects of their products.

- Require changes in tobacco products, such as the removal or reduction of harmful ingredients.

- Prohibit health claims about so-called "reduced risk" products that are not scientifically proven or that would discourage current tobacco users from quitting or encourage new users to start.

- Require larger, more effective health warnings on tobacco products.

- Prohibit terms such as "low-tar," "light" and "mild" that have mislead consumers into believing that certain cigarettes are safer than others.

"Until Congress grants the FDA authority over tobacco products, America's children and consumers will continue to be guinea pigs in the tobacco industry's never-ending experiments to sell more of its deadly and addictive products," said William V. Corr, Executive Director, Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids.

The Senate bill, sponsored by U.S. Senators Edward Kennedy (D-MA) and John Cornyn (R-TX), has 56 cosponsors, while the House bill, sponsored by U.S. Reps. Henry Waxman (D-CA) and Tom Davis (R-VA), has 215 cosponsors. The legislation is also supported by more than 560 public health, faith and other organizations across the country. Polling has found that 70 percent of American voters support Congress passing the legislation.